

Task V:

**Food
Instruments**

Module A:

Prescribing

Food Instruments

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Overview

Introduction

This module will help you to understand how WIC prescribes food instruments.

Learning Objectives

After completing this module the Nutrition Assistant will be able to:

- identify WIC authorized foods;
 - identify the main nutrients in WIC foods and describe their functions in the body;
 - describe how foods are selected to be included on the WIC food list;
 - identify the information printed on food instruments;
 - list the foods included in the food packages for the participant categories;
 - explain how changes in participant status affect food package content;
 - describe procedure for prescribing special foods and tailored food packages;
 - explain what documents to issue to participants, proxies and alternates;
 - show what food instruments are issued when a participant is disqualified; and
 - identify what food instrument to prescribe for a given participant.
-

** Words that you may not know are **underlined**. Definitions for these words can be found in the **Glossary** at the end of the module. (Note: Words are only underlined the first few times they appear in the text.)*

Food Instruments

Definition

A food instrument is a special check given at WIC that is used to buy WIC authorized foods.

Food instruments are sometimes called:

- “checks”, or
 - “vouchers”, or
 - “coupons.”
-

Description

Food instruments contain:

- a serial number,
 - the participant’s ISIS ID number,
 - the family’s name,
 - first and last days to use,
 - store name and address,
 - type of food,
 - amount of food,
 - the maximum amount of money that can be spent for each Food Instrument, and
 - a participant signature line.
-

Learning Activity 1

To learn more about food instruments you may want to try **Learning Activity 1** found at the end of this module.

WIC Authorized Foods

Definition

WIC authorized foods are the foods that participants may buy with their WIC food instruments. WIC staff sometimes call these foods “WIC allowed foods.”

List

WIC authorized foods include:

- milk,
 - cheese,
 - eggs,
 - juices,
 - cereal,
 - peanut butter,
 - dry beans and peas,
 - tuna,
 - carrots,
 - infant formula, and
 - infant cereal.
-

The Nutrients in WIC Foods

Definition

Nutrients are substances needed by the body for:

- energy,
 - growth,
 - maintenance and repair, or
 - regulation of body functions.
-

5 Nutrients

WIC foods are rich in certain nutrients. These nutrients are:

- calcium,
 - iron,
 - Vitamin A,
 - Vitamin C, and
 - protein.
-

Calcium

Calcium is a mineral. Minerals are nutrients needed in small amounts by the body to function.

Our body needs calcium to:

- form bones and teeth,
 - help blood clot,
 - stimulate nerves,
 - prevent infections,
 - help muscles contract,
 - maintain normal blood pressure, and
 - maintain the heartbeat.
-

Iron

Iron is also a mineral.

Our body needs iron for:

- normal growth,
 - learning,
 - preventing infections, and
 - making hemoglobin (the substance that carries oxygen to the cells in the body).
-

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The Nutrients in WIC Foods (continued)

Vitamins

Vitamins are substances that are needed in very small amounts by our bodies to stay healthy.

Our body needs vitamins to:

- absorb and use other nutrients and
- regulate body processes.

You will learn more about vitamins in the module *Basic Nutrition*.

Vitamin A

Vitamin A is needed to:

- see in the dark,
 - develop bones and teeth,
 - maintain skin and mucus membranes, and
 - prevent infections.
-

Vitamin C

Vitamin C is needed to:

- improve iron absorption,
 - heal wounds,
 - strengthen blood vessels,
 - prevent infections, and
 - help the body with bone growth.
-

Protein

Protein is the basic structure found in our body. Almost everything in our bodies contains protein.

Our body needs protein to:

- build and maintain tissue,
 - regulate body processes,
 - fight infections, and
 - provide energy.
-

Chart of WIC Foods

The chart on the next page shows the nutrients and the WIC foods that have these nutrients.

The Nutrients in WIC Foods (continued)

Nutrients in WIC Foods

Nutrient	WIC Foods
Calcium	milk cheese infant formula some juices
Iron	cereal beans infant formula tuna
Protein	peanut butter dried beans eggs cheese milk infant formula tuna
Vitamin A	vegetable juice cereal infant formula carrots milk
Vitamin C	fruit juice infant formula carrots

Selection of WIC Foods

Who Chooses the WIC Foods?

The **United States Department of Agriculture (USDA)** sets rules for the kinds of foods the WIC Program can offer. These foods contain the nutrients most often low in the diets of low-income women, infants, and children.

The **California WIC Program** uses these rules to decide on the specific foods that participants can buy with food instruments in California.

How Are WIC Foods Chosen?

WIC chooses foods based on:

- nutrient composition,
 - availability,
 - acceptability,
 - appropriateness,
 - package size,
 - cost, and
 - variety.
-

Nutrient Composition

The food must meet the USDA WIC regulations and the specific California WIC Program's requirements for how much of each nutrient the food contains.

Availability

The food must be available statewide.

For example, if a juice is only available in Fresno it could NOT be a WIC allowed food for California.

Acceptability

The food must be acceptable to WIC participants.

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Selection of WIC Foods (continued)

Appropriateness

The food should be appropriate for the participant's category.

For example, orange juice would NOT be appropriate for a 4-month old infant and raw carrots would not be acceptable for a toddler.

Package Size

WIC chooses package sizes so that participants can buy the full quantity or close to the full quantity of food allowed. Package sizes are also selected to get the most for the money.

Cost

The food should be of high quality but as economical as possible.

Variety

There should be adequate variety in a food type.

For example, in cereals there should be variety in the grain types (whole grain or refined), texture (flake, puff or nugget), or grain source (corn, rice, oat, wheat, etc.)

Learning Activity 2

To learn more about the WIC authorized foods you may want to try **Learning Activity 2** found at the end of this module.

Food Package Contents

Definition

A WIC food package is a combination of WIC authorized foods that are given to a participant.

Prescriptions

Food packages are prescribed based on the participant's:

- category,
 - age, and
 - nutritional need.
-

Descriptions

There are over 50 different WIC food packages. The *ISIS Job Aids* lists these packages by category. This listing gives the food package name and a basic description of the foods contained in each food package.

Prescribing Special Foods and Tailored Food Packages

Although you will most often prescribe one of the standard food packages, sometimes a participant will:

- not use all the foods prescribed,
- need other foods in place of those in the standard food package,
- need a food package that does not require refrigeration or storage, or
- need a food package designed for people with special medical conditions.

When this happens, you will change the food package to meet the needs of the participant.

Learning Activity 3

To learn more about the different food packages you may want to try **Learning Activity 3** found at the end of this module.

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Food Package Contents (continued)

Learning Activity 4

To learn more about the special food packages you may want to try **Learning Activity 4** found at the end of this module.

Alternates & Proxies

Alternates/Proxies

Sometimes a participant will not be able to come to her/his WIC appointment. S/he may not be able to go to an appointment because s/he:

- is sick,
 - has a work schedule that conflicts with the appointment,
 - is caring for a sick family member, or
 - does not have transportation to get to the appointment.
-

Alternates

An alternate is someone the participant has chosen to pick up and use the food instruments when the participant cannot do so.

The alternate's name is in ISIS in the field for "Alternate." The alternate's name and signature are also on the WIC Authorization Folder (WAF). There is space in ISIS and on the WAF for at least 2 alternates.

The participant or the local agency should instruct the alternate on the correct way to use food instruments.

Proxies

A proxy is someone the participant chooses to pick up the food instruments. The proxy's name is NOT on the WAF.

The proxy's name is documented in the "Proxy" field in ISIS, but only for that specific appointment.

A proxy **cannot** use the food instruments at the grocery store.

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Alternates & Proxies (continued)

Differences Between Alternates & Proxies

There are some differences between alternates and proxies. These are listed in the chart on the next page.

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Alternates & Proxies (continued)

Differences between Alternates & Proxies

Item	Alternate	Proxy
Must sign WAF	Yes	No
Can pick up food instruments at WIC site	Yes	Yes
Must bring a note dated and signed by the participant giving permission to pick up food instruments	No	Yes
Must show ID when picking up food instruments	Yes	Yes
Can sign & use food instruments at the grocery store	Yes	No
Must attend class for participant	No**	No**
Name must be typed in each time in ISIS	No (name appears in "Alternate" field in ISIS.)	Yes

** Class attendance is highly encouraged. Check to see what your agency's policy is regarding class attendance.

Documents for Participants, Alternates & Proxies

Documents

There are several documents that you or the participant will need before you can issue food instruments. These are:

- the WIC Authorization Folder (WAF),
 - written notes for proxies, and
 - photo ID's for alternates or proxies.
-

WIC Authorization Folder

The WIC Authorization Folder, also called WAF, is the identification card given to the adult member that enrolls her/himself or a family member in WIC.

The WAF contains:

- family name,
- family ID number,
- local WIC agency name and address,
- individual participant names,
- individual ID numbers,
- adult family member's signature,
- alternate signatures, and
- appointment dates/times.

A participant must show the WAF:

- at the WIC site to get her/his food instruments and
 - at the store to buy WIC foods.
-

Note from Proxy

To pick up food instruments at the WIC site a proxy must have a note from the participant. The note must include:

- a statement giving the proxy permission to pick up the food instruments,
 - the date, and
 - the signature of the participant.
-

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Documents for Participants, Alternates & Proxies (continued)

Learning Activity 5

To learn more about some of these documents you may want to try **Learning Activity 5** found at the end of this module.

Disqualification

Definition

Disqualification is taking a certified participant or family off of the WIC Program when they do not meet eligibility criteria for continued participation.

Disqualification Times

A local agency may disqualify a participant:

- at a recertification appointment or
- in the mid-certification period.

Reasons for Disqualification

There are several reasons why a participant may be disqualified. These reasons are listed below.

Reason	Recertification	Mid-Certification
No longer in a category served by WIC	√	√
Exceeds maximum income for eligibility	√	√
Fails to provide required documentation	√	
No longer has nutritional need	√	
Participant not present at appointment	√	
No longer in a priority served by local agency	√	
Fails to provide proof of category		√
Program abuse by participant, parent, guardian, caretaker, or representative of the participant		√
Dual participation		√

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Disqualification (continued)

Notification

The local agency shall notify each participant, parent, or caretaker of disqualification by issuing a *Notice of Action Affecting WIC Program Participation* (DHS Form 4304).

The effective date of disqualification shall be **15 days** after the notice is issued.

Food Instruments Issued

When a participant is disqualified from WIC s/he may be issued food instruments for the remainder of her/his certification period depending on the effective date of disqualification.

If 15 days or more remain before the participant's current food instruments expire (before the *Last Day to Use*), do NOT issue additional food instruments.

If fewer than 15 days remain before the participant's current food instruments expire (before the *Last Day to Use*), issue one month of food instruments to comply with the notice requirement.

Summary

Food Instruments

Food instruments are special checks given at WIC that are used to buy WIC authorized foods. Food instruments are sometimes called “vouchers”, “checks”, or “coupons”.

WIC Authorized Foods

WIC authorized foods are the foods that participants may buy with food instruments. They include:

- milk,
 - cheese,
 - eggs,
 - juices,
 - cereal,
 - peanut butter,
 - dry beans and peas,
 - tuna,
 - carrots,
 - infant formula, and
 - infant cereal.
-

Nutrients in WIC Foods

WIC foods are rich in:

- calcium,
 - iron,
 - Vitamin A,
 - Vitamin C, and
 - protein.
-

Selection of WIC Foods

WIC chooses foods based on:

- nutrient composition,
 - availability,
 - acceptability,
 - appropriateness,
 - package size,
 - cost, and
 - variety.
-

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Summary (continued)

Food Package Contents

A WIC food package is a combination of WIC allowed foods that are given to a participant based on the participant's category, age, and nutritional need.

Alternates & Proxies

Alternates and proxies are people the participant has chosen to pick up and/or use WIC food instruments when the participant cannot do so.

Alternates are listed in ISIS and on the WAF and may use WIC food instruments at the grocery store.

Proxies must bring in a note signed by the participant to pick up food instruments at WIC. They cannot use food instruments at the grocery store.

Documents

There are several documents that a WIC staff person or a participant will need before food instruments can be issued. These are:

- the WIC Authorization Folder (WAF),
 - written notes for proxies, and
 - photo ID's for alternates or proxies.
-

Glossary

alternate- An alternate is someone who the participant has chosen to pick up and/or use food instruments at the store when the participant cannot do so.

calcium- Calcium is the mineral needed by the body to form bones and teeth, help blood clot, stimulate nerves, maintain normal blood pressure, help muscles contract, and maintain the heartbeat.

disqualified- Disqualified is no longer qualifying to participate in the WIC Program.

disqualification- Disqualification is taking a certified participant or family off of the WIC Program when they do not meet eligibility criteria for continued participation.

food instrument- A food instrument is a special check given at WIC that is used to buy WIC authorized foods at WIC authorized grocery stores.

food packages- A WIC food package is a combination of WIC authorized foods that are given to a participant based on the participant's category, age and nutritional need.

infant formula- Infant formula is a specially made mixture of nutrients, in a powder or liquid form, given to infants when breastfeeding is not possible or breast milk is not sufficient.

iron- Iron is the mineral needed for normal growth, learning, preventing infections, and making hemoglobin for red blood cells.

mineral- Minerals are the nutrients needed to form body structures and help regulate chemical reactions in the body.

nutrient – A nutrient is a substance that is needed by the body for energy, growth, maintenance, and repair of tissues or regulation of body processes.

prescribing- Prescribing is selecting the appropriate food package for a participant.

protein- Protein is the nutrient needed to build and maintain tissue, regulate body processes, fight infections, and provide energy.

Glossary (continued)

proxy- A proxy is someone who the participant has asked to pick up food instruments when the participant cannot do so.

vitamin- Vitamins are the nutrients needed to absorb and use other nutrients and regulate body processes.

Vitamin A- Vitamin A is a fat-soluble vitamin that helps develop healthy eyes, skin, mucous membranes, helps prevent infections, and helps develop bones and teeth.

Vitamin C- Vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin that is needed to form collagen, help heal wounds, help develop gums and teeth, increase iron absorption, and strengthen blood vessels.

WIC authorized foods- WIC authorized foods are foods that participants may buy with food instruments.

WIC Authorization Folder (WAF)- The WIC Authorization Folder, also called WAF, is the identification card given to the adult member that enrolls her/himself or a family member in WIC.

Progress Check

1. Match the following words to their definitions.

<u>Words</u>		<u>Definition</u>
_____ WIC authorized food	A	Foods participants may buy with Food Instruments
_____ Nutrient	B	WIC “check” or “voucher”
_____ Food package	C	A combination of WIC authorized foods given to a participant
_____ WIC Authorization Folder	D	Substances needed by the body for energy, growth, maintenance, repair, or regulation.
_____ Food Instrument	E	Identification card given to the adult member that enrolls her/himself or a family member in WIC.

2. Put a check (✓) next to the WIC authorized foods.

_____ milk	_____ eggs
_____ yogurt	_____ broccoli
_____ infant cereal	_____ cheese
_____ carrots	_____ juice
_____ bread	_____ cereal
_____ peanut butter	_____ bananas
_____ spinach	_____ oranges
_____ tuna	_____ jam

Progress Check (continued)

3. Match the following WIC authorized foods with their primary nutrients.

_____ Juice	A Vitamin A
_____ Carrots	B Calcium
_____ Milk	C Vitamin C
_____ Eggs	D Iron
_____ Cereal	E Protein

4. WIC chooses foods based on: (Check (✓) all that apply.)

- ___ nutrient composition
- ___ availability
- ___ digestibility
- ___ acceptability
- ___ appropriateness
- ___ ready to use
- ___ cost
- ___ package size
- ___ variety

Progress Check (continued)

5. For the statements that follow, mark with a check (✓) those that are true for an alternate or a proxy

Statement	Alternate	Proxy
Must sign WAF		
Must bring a note dated and signed by the participant to pick up food instruments		
Can pick up food instruments at WIC site		
Must attend class for participant		
Must show ID when picking up food instruments		
Can sign food instruments at the grocery store		
Can use food instruments at the grocery store.		

Learning Activities

The following activities are included and are recommended for interactive learning:

- Learning Activity 1: Food Instruments
- Learning Activity 2: WIC Allowed Foods
- Learning Activity 3: Food Packages
- Learning Activity 4: Special Foods & Tailored Food Packages
- Learning Activity 5: WAF

Activity 1: Food Instruments

Learning Objectives After completing this activity the Nutrition Assistant will be able to:

- identify the parts of a food instrument.

Instructions

1. Ask your mentor or supervisor for a sample WIC food instrument. (Your agency may have a laminated version of a food instrument available for training purposes.)
2. Looking at the sample food instrument locate the following:
 - individual ID number,
 - family name,
 - first day to use,
 - last day to use,
 - serial number,
 - WIC allowed foods,
 - store name and address,
 - amount not to exceed, and
 - signature line.
3. Use the form on the next page. Put a check mark next to each item as you find it on the sample food instrument and also write in the information for each item.
4. Talk with your mentor or supervisor if you have any questions.

continued on next page

Activity 1: Food Instruments

Sample Food Instrument

Check (√)	Item	
	Individual ID Number	
	Family Name	
	First Day to Use	
	Last Day to Use	
	Serial Number	
	Quantity of WIC Allowed Foods	
	Type or Brand of WIC Allowed Foods	
	Store Name/Number	
	Amount Not to Exceed	
	Purchase Price	
	Signature Line	

Activity 2: WIC Authorized Foods

Learning Objectives After completing this activity the Nutrition Assistant will be able to:

- identify the WIC authorized foods.

Background

The *WIC Allowed Foods Shopping Guide* and the *California WIC Program WIC Allowed Food List* contain the list of WIC authorized foods. You will need to be familiar with the most current list of WIC authorized foods.

Instructions

1. Ask your mentor or supervisor for a copy of:
 - *WIC Allowed Foods Shopping Guide* and
 - *California WIC Program WIC Allowed Food List*.
 2. Take this list with you when you go to the grocery store.
 3. Look for the WIC authorized foods.
 4. Write down each food, its size, and its price in the chart on the next page.
 5. Make sure to look for the allowed container sizes and quantities. (The grocery store you go to may NOT have all the allowed sizes.)
 6. Discuss your experience with your mentor or supervisor. Was it easy to find all the foods?
-

Activity 2: WIC Authorized Foods

Food	Size	Price

Activity 3: Food Packages

Learning Objectives After completing this activity, the Nutrition Assistant will be able to:

- identify food packages for 9 case studies.

Background

There are over 50 WIC food packages. Each food package contains different combinations and/or quantities of foods.

The food package a participant gets depends on:

- category,
- age, and
- nutritional need.

Some special food packages must be prescribed by a health care provider and approved by the WIC nutritionist.

Instructions

1. Read each of the case studies on the following pages.
 2. Using the *ISIS Job Aids*, identify the correct food package for each case study.
 3. Also list the foods that are in the food package for each case study.
 4. If you need help talk to your supervisor or mentor.
-

Activity 3: Food Packages**Case Study 1:**

Mai Yang is 22 years old and expecting her first baby in 4 months.

Which food package & foods should Mai get?

Case Study 2:

Lupe Hernandez is a 2-month-old, formula fed infant. Her mother comes back to the WIC clinic with a note from her doctor stating that Lupe is allergic to corn syrup and requesting that she get Good Start formula.

With authorization from the WIC Nutritionist, which food package & foods should Lupe get?

Activity 3: Food Packages**Case Study 3:**

Keisha Johnson came to her WIC appointment in August and told you that she stopped breastfeeding her 8-month-old son Kevin in July. He takes formula and solid foods now.

Which food package & foods should Kevin get in August?

----should Keisha get in August?

Case Study 4:

Jose is 3 months old. He is being breastfed by his mother Maria. She does not use any formula.

Which food package & foods should Jose get?

---should Maria get?

Activity 3: Food Packages**Case Study 5:**

Ana Petrovich turns 1 year old this month. Her mother says she is drinking whole milk with no problem.

Which food package & foods should Ana get?

Case Study 6:

Bui Nguyen is 7 months old. Bui's mother Tang, breastfeeds Bui and also gives him Enfamil infant formula 2 times a day.

Which food package should Bui get?

---should Tang get?

Activity 3: Food Packages**Case Study 7:**

Sylvia is 2 ½ years old. Her mother says she is still on infant formula. A note from her doctor says Sylvia needs Isomil.

With authorization from the WIC Nutritionist, which food package & foods should Sylvia get?

Case Study 8:

Emily Chang has a daughter Grace who is 3 months old. Emily does not breastfeed Grace at all. Grace is doing fine on formula with iron.

Which food package & foods should Emily get?

---should Grace get?

Activity 3: Food Packages

Case Study 9:

Keishari Parker is an underweight 2½-year-old girl, drinking cow's milk. The nutritionist decides she needs a food package with more calories and food.

Which food package & foods should Keishari get?

Activity 4: Special Foods & Tailored Food Packages

Learning Objectives After completing this activity the Nutrition Assistant will be able to:

- identify how changes can be made to meet the special needs of participants.

Instructions

1. Read each of the case studies on the following pages.
 2. Using the *ISIS Job Aids*, identify the correct food package to meet the special needs for each case study.
 3. If you need help talk to your supervisor or mentor.
-

Activity 4: Special Foods & Tailored Food Packages

Case Study 1:

Belinda Jones is pregnant. She tells you she is homeless.

Which food package & foods should Belinda get?

Case Study 2:

Andrew Nguyen is 2 years old. His mother has a written medical note stating that Andrew is lactose intolerant.

Which food package should Andrew get?

Activity 4: Special Foods & Tailored Food Packages**Case Study 3:**

Sally Chun is pregnant. She shows you a written note from her doctor telling you she is lactose intolerant. She does not like the acidophilus milk.

Which food package & foods should Sally get?

Case Study 4

Jesus Jimenez is 3 months old. His mother has stopped breastfeeding. She brings in a prescription from his doctor for a specific formula since Jesus is lactose intolerant.

Which food package should Jesus get?

Activity 5: WAF

Learning Objectives	<p>After completing this activity the Nutrition Assistant will be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• familiar with the WAF.
Background	<p>The WAF is the WIC Authorization Folder.</p>
Instructions	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Ask your mentor or supervisor for a copy of the <i>WIC Authorization Folder (WAF)</i>.2. Have your mentor or supervisor explain how this document is used in your agency.3. If you have any questions, talk to your mentor or supervisor.

Progress Check Answers

1. Match the following terms (words) to their definitions.

<u>Term/Word(s)</u>	<u>Definition</u>
<u>A</u> WIC authorized food	A Foods participants may buy with Food Instruments
<u>D</u> Nutrient	B WIC “check” or “voucher”
<u>C</u> Food package	C A combination of WIC authorized foods given to a participant
<u>E</u> WIC Authorization Folder	D Substances needed by the body for energy, growth, maintenance, repair, or regulation.
<u>B</u> Food Instrument	E Identification card given to the adult member that enrolls her/ himself or a family member in WIC.

2. Put a check (✓) next to the WIC authorized foods.

<u>✓</u> milk	<u>✓</u> eggs
<u> </u> yogurt	<u> </u> broccoli
<u>✓</u> infant cereal	<u>✓</u> cheese
<u>✓</u> carrots	<u>✓</u> juice
<u> </u> bread	<u>✓</u> cereal
<u>✓</u> peanut butter	<u> </u> bananas
<u> </u> spinach	<u> </u> oranges
<u>✓</u> tuna	<u> </u> jam

Progress Check Answers (continued)

3. Match the following WIC authorized foods with their primary nutrients.

<u>C</u>	Juice	A	Vitamin A
<u>A</u>	Carrots	B	Calcium
<u>B</u>	Milk	C	Vitamin C
<u>E</u>	Eggs	D	Iron
<u>D</u>	Cereal	E	Protein

4. WIC chooses foods based on: (Check (✓) all that apply.)

✓ nutrient composition

✓ availability

 digestibility

✓ acceptability

✓ appropriateness

 ready to use

✓ cost

✓ package size

✓ variety

Progress Check Answers (continued)

5. For the statements that follow, mark with a check (✓) those that are true for an alternate or a proxy

Statement	Alternate	Proxy
Must sign WAF	✓	
Must bring a note dated and signed by the participant to pick up food instruments		✓
Can pick up food instruments at WIC site	✓	✓
Must attend class for participant		
Must show ID when picking up food instruments	✓	✓
Can sign food instruments at the grocery store	✓	
Can use food instruments at the grocery store.	✓	